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Patriarch Kirill consecrates new cathedral for Russian armed forces

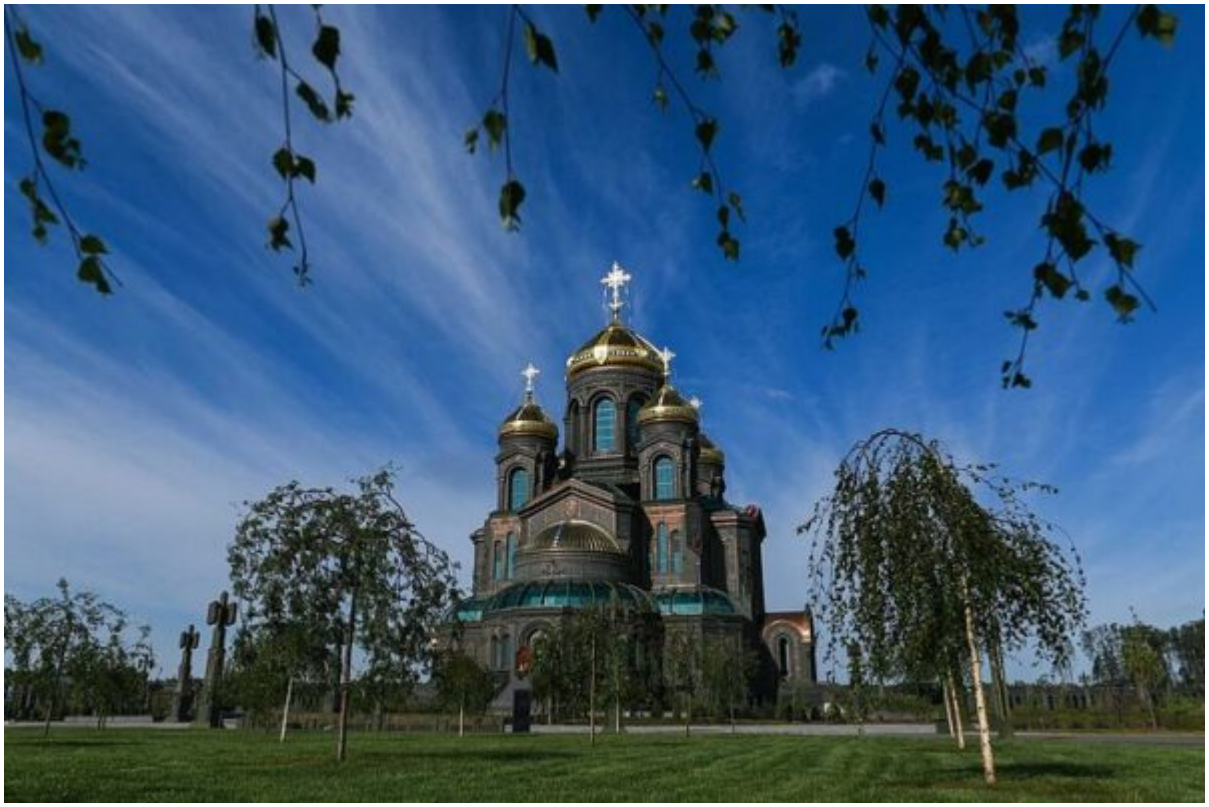


Yesterday, June 14, on the Sunday of All Saints, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated the rite of the great consecration of the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ—the main church of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, located in the military-patriotic park in Kubinka outside of Moscow—followed by the Divine Liturgy.

The church was the focus of a recent scandal after it became known that a mosaic in honor of the return of Crimea to Russia featured a mosaic of President Vladimir Putin and that a mosaic in honor of the victory over Nazi Germany featured the face of Joseph Stalin on banners that soldiers were carrying in celebration on Red Square.

President Putin himself said that it was inappropriate to have his image in the church, while voices within the Church disagreed about the appropriateness of Stalin's face—some arguing it was historically accurate to depict him on the banners, while others arguing that is an affront to the countless martyrs and

confessors of the Russian Church who died under his terrible reign.



In the end, both faces were removed.

On the day of the consecration, the square outside the cathedral was filled with parade units from the various branches of the armed forces. Before the beginning of the celebration, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu arrived at the church, welcoming the veterans of WW2 who were at the church, reports the site of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Then the hierarchs and clergy greeted Pat. Kirill at the western gate of the church. Five altars were consecrated in the upper chamber, with the central altar being dedicated to the Resurrection of Christ. The other four were dedicated to the patron saints of the branches of the armed forces: St. Alexander Nevsky for the ground forces, Prophet Elijah for the aerospace and airborne divisions, St. Andrew for the navy, and the Great Martyr Barbara for the strategic missile forces. The lower church was also consecrated in honor of St. Vladimir the Great.



His Holiness was concelebrated by 8 bishops and a number of priests. The service was attended by a number of government and military representatives.

The Litany of Fervent Supplication included petitions “for mercy, life, peace, health, and salvation of the military leaders and valiant soldiers of the defenders of our fatherland and all those who worked to build and beautify this Holy temple.”

Prayers were also read to stop the spread of the coronavirus, and for the repose of the souls of all soldiers who have given their lives in defense of the Russian land.



At the end of the service, Pat. Kirill addressed those present with a primatial word, after which he presented the wonderworking Kaplunovsk Icon of the Mother of God to the cathedral as a gift, explaining that the icon helped the Russian army win against the Swedes in the Battle of Poltava under Tsar Peter I in 1709. The Patriarch also gifted his personal icon of the Holy Trinity that he had kept in his cell.

He then exited the church onto the square, where he addressed the armed forces gathered there, thanking them for their service to the Russian people and land:

Therefore, your mission is very great. Remember this, and always remain true to your oath. Remember that all the people and the entire country are behind you. And the duty of the Church is to pray for you, for your relatives and friends, for our fatherland. Let the historical path of our people flow in such harmony between the armed forces and the spiritual power of the Church, in the harmony of the spiritual and material, state and Church, in peace and prosperity. God grant that there will be new victories and new achievements along the way, and that there will never be any defeats. May God’s blessing be with our armed forces and with our people.

Pat. Kirill also announced that he will serve as rector of the new cathedral.

The construction of the new cathedral was one of the most large-scale Church and public projects in recent decades, costing more than $42,720,000 (3 billion rubles), collected from donations from individuals, companies, and organizations. There were about 100,000 donors in all.

The cathedral is the third largest in Russia, after Christ the Savior in Moscow and St. Isaac’s in St. Petersburg, at a height of 310 feet.
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